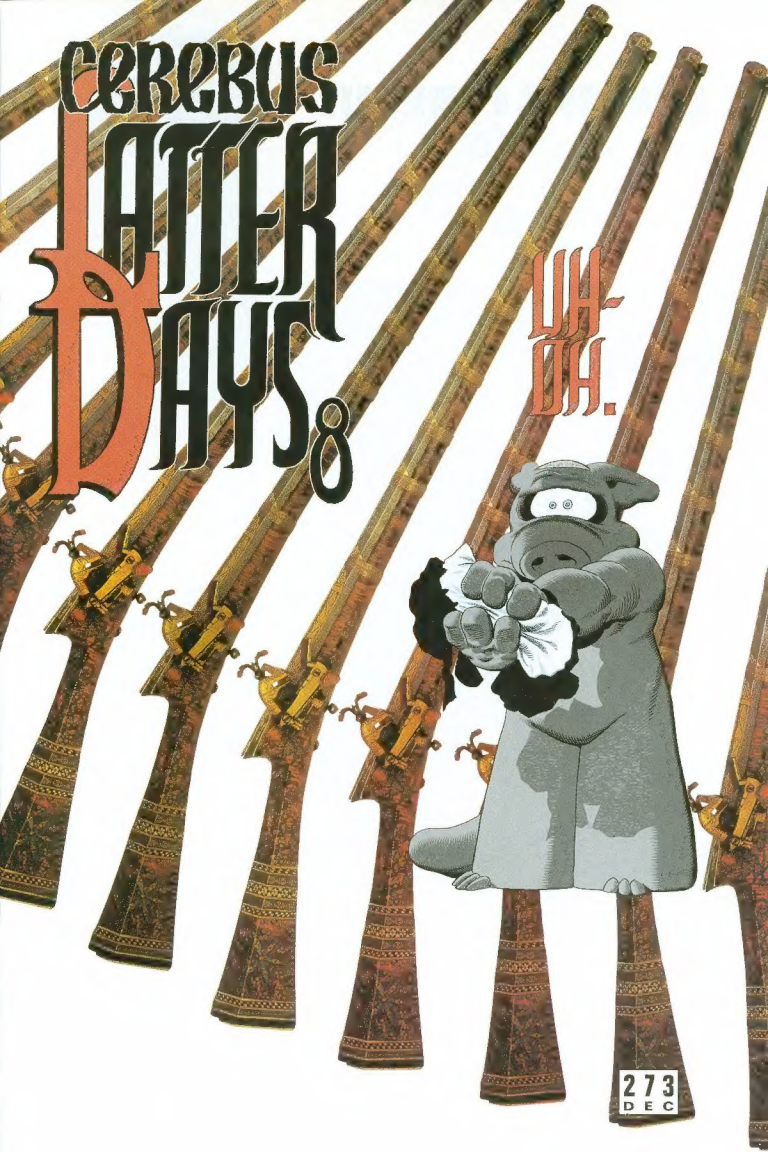
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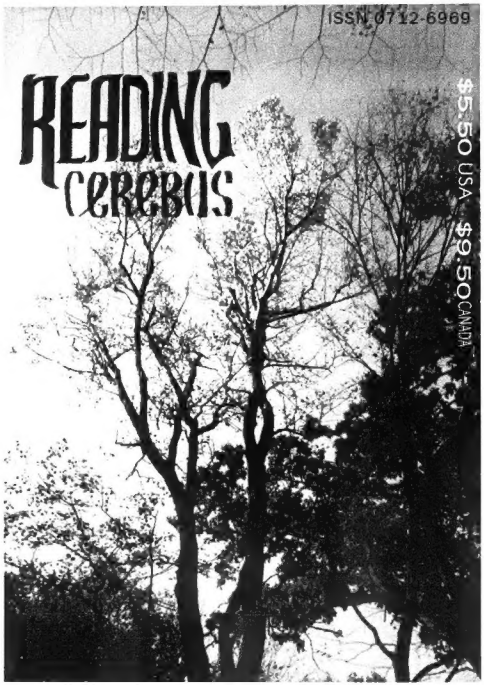

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Review by Dave Sim
begins on page 21

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NO. 273 DECEMBER 2001

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LATTER DAYS

•

PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 266
and 267)

•

BOOK ONE
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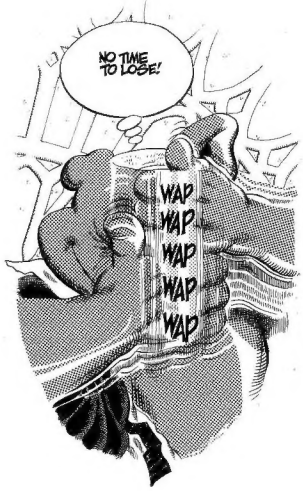
AT THE TIME, THE FACT THAT CEREBUS HAD GOTTEN THE "DROWNING GLNS" ANSWER RIGHT HAD SEEMED MUCH LESS IMPORTANT
THAN CEREBUS' CERTAINTY THAT...
(NOW THAT HE WAS FREE AGAIN)
... ALL OF HIS RABBI POWERS HAD BEEN RESTORED TO HIM:
HIS RABBI LOGARITHM AND ANTILOGARITHM VISION!
HIS RABBI HERNIOPLASTY TOUCH!
HIS RABBI MEGALOCEPHALIC EXPANDO-CRANIUM!
HIS RABBI LEVOROTATORY AND DEXTROROTATORY BREATH!
HIS RABBI
WELL.
YOU GET THE IDEA.



SEE. THE WORD OF TRUTH **HADN'T BEEN** THE WORD OF TRUTH **AT ALL!** **SEE.** THE WAY **CERBERUS** FIGURED IT, IT HAD BEEN **SO LONG** SINCE THE LAST **WAR** THERE PROBABLY WASN'T ANYONE LEFT **ALIVE** (**BESIDES** (**CERBERUS**) WHO KNEW **BUPKES** OR (**EVEN**) **MAKKES** FROM **MILITARY STRATEGY**

(**SEE.** IF YOU JUST ATTACK A FEW HUNDRED GUYS OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF A **FIELD** ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS **SURROUND THEM** WITH **SUPERIOR NUMBERS!**) (WHICH THE CATHOLICS **HAD**) (AND **ASSUME THEM** OUT BY **CUTTING THEIR SUPPLY LINES...**) ...OF COURSE **KNOWING** THE **CIRINISTS**

IT WAS **FAR MORE LIKELY** THAT THEY WOULD JUST SEND **TWO** OR **THREE** (OR **SIX** OR **EIGHT** OR **TWELVE**) DIVISIONS **ACROSS** THE FIELD-- **SACRIFICE** A FEW THOUSAND CIRINISTS TO KILL A FEW **HUNDRED GUYS** -- **LEAVE** ALL THE CORPSES **RIGHT** WHERE THEY FELL TO **ROT CLEAN** DOWN TO THEIR SKELETONS -- WAIT UNTIL THE BONES WERE BLEACHED **WHITE** BY THE SUN- **BUILD** A **PARK** AROUND THEM-- AND TURN IT INTO A **TOURIST ATTRACTION**

JUST TO (YOU KNOW) **MAKE A POINT**

OF COURSE (CHUCKLE) (AS CEREBUS SAW IT) NONE OF THAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN NOW THAT CEREBUS HAD ALL HIS

RABBI

POWERS BACK: HIS FOLLOWERS WOULD MERELY SERVE AS BAIT-- DRAWING THE CIRINIST LEGIONS TO THEM.... WHILE CEREBUS (IN TWO SHAKES OF A LAMBS TAIL) WOULD FLY WAY. WAY. WAY UP NORTH TO PICK UP A COUPLE OF GOOD-SIZED GLACIERS WITH WHICH TO (CHUCKLE) SURPRISE HOWEVER-MANY-THOUSANDS OF CIRINISTS (FOOLISHLY) DECIDED TO ASSEMBLE ON THE PLAINS OF SARAH!

... DROP IT INTO THE SECRET POUCH IN THE LINING OF MY RABBI MORNING COAT.

LIKEWISE

FLUMP

FLUMP

WITH MY FULLY DETACHABLE

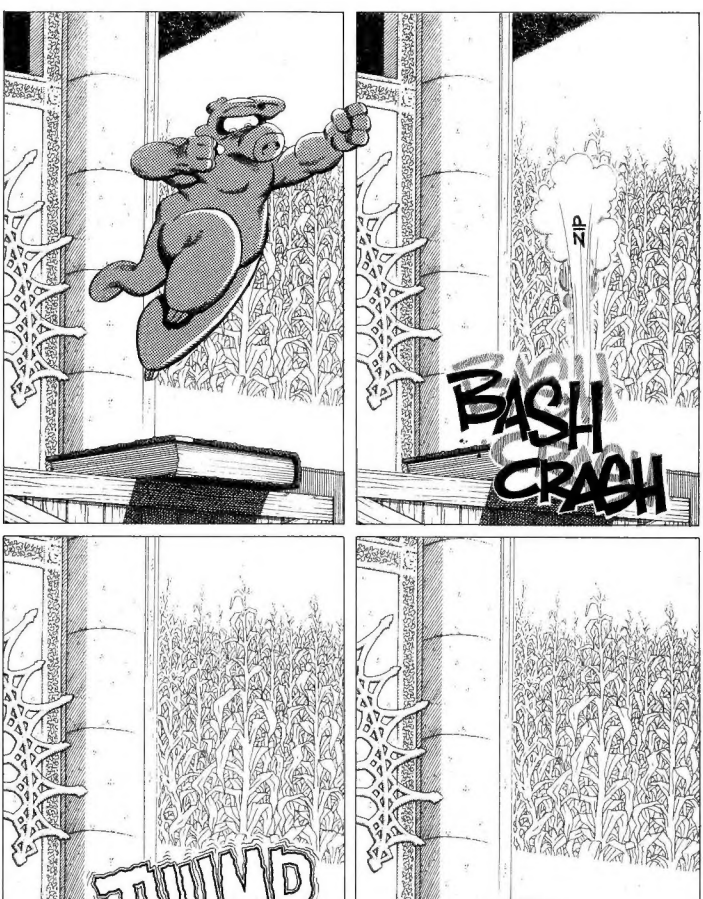
FULLY.

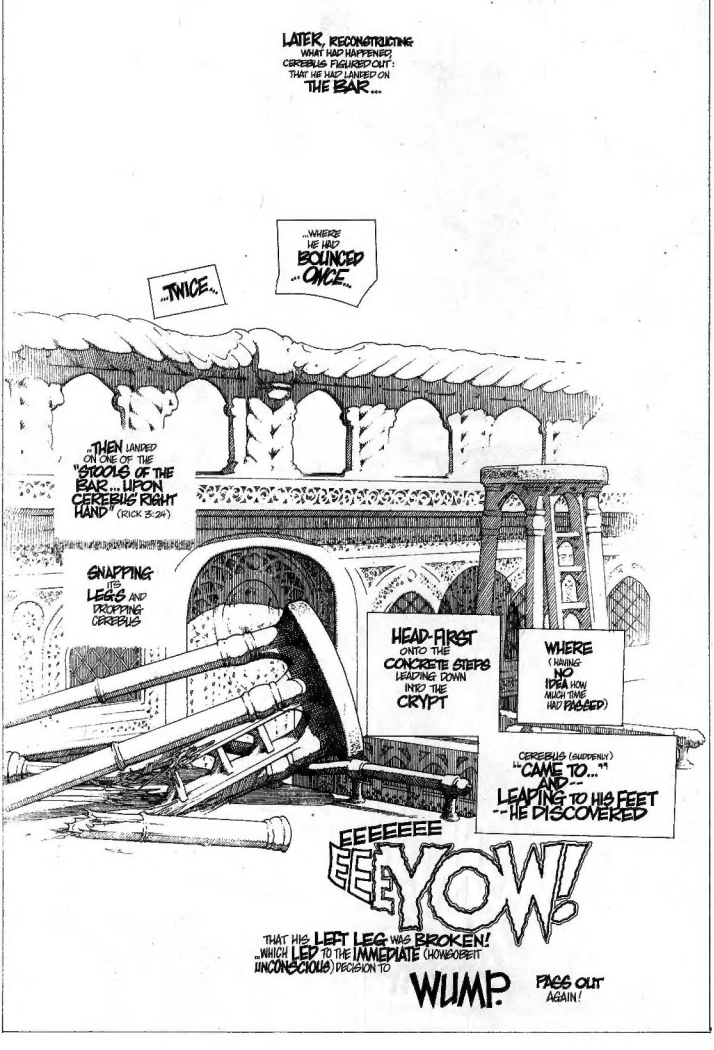
DETACHABLE.

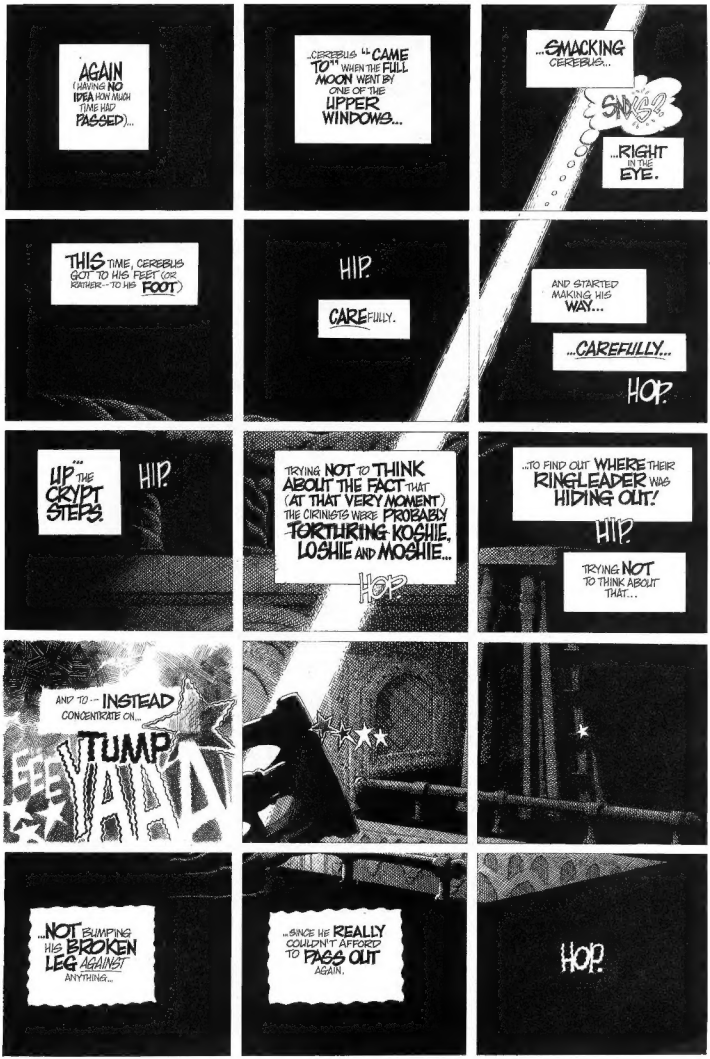
YIPE

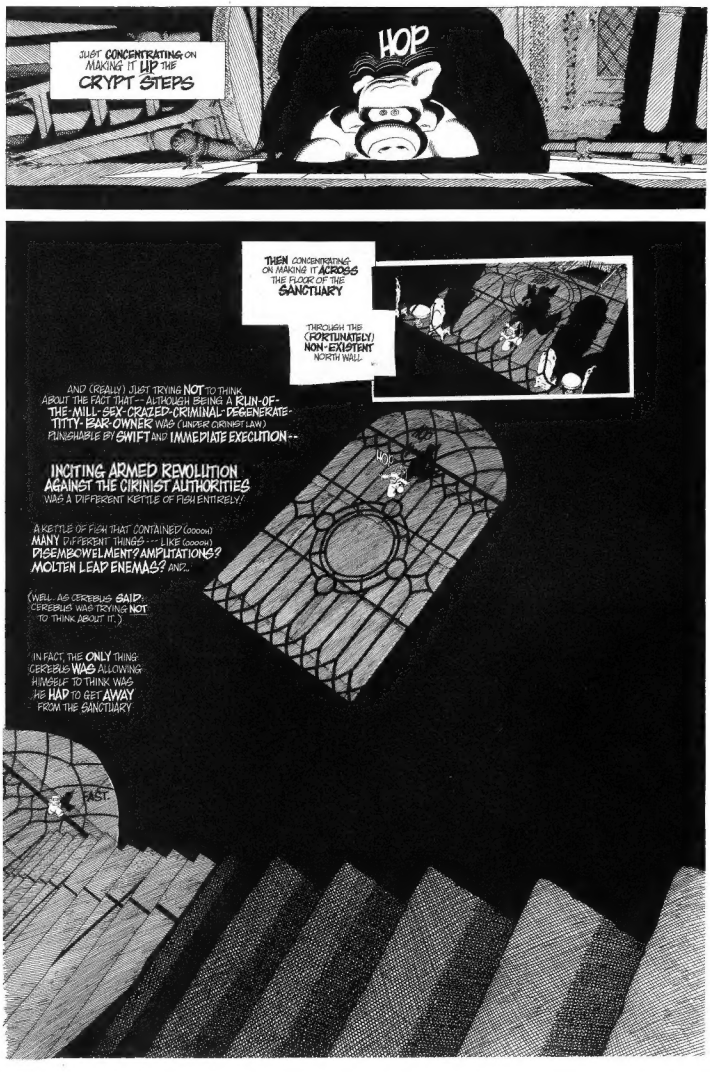
NO TIME FOR THAT NOW.

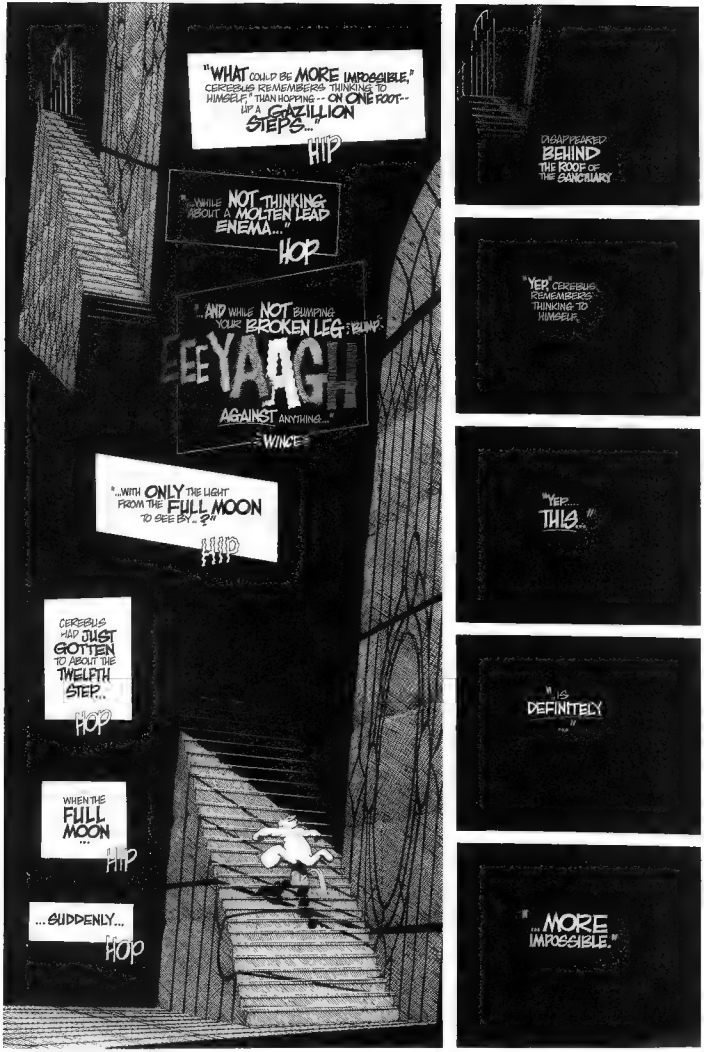
THIS...
LOOKEST LIKE UNTO A JOB FOR
RABBI!
...RABH...
...RABBI...
...AWAY!
LEAP!

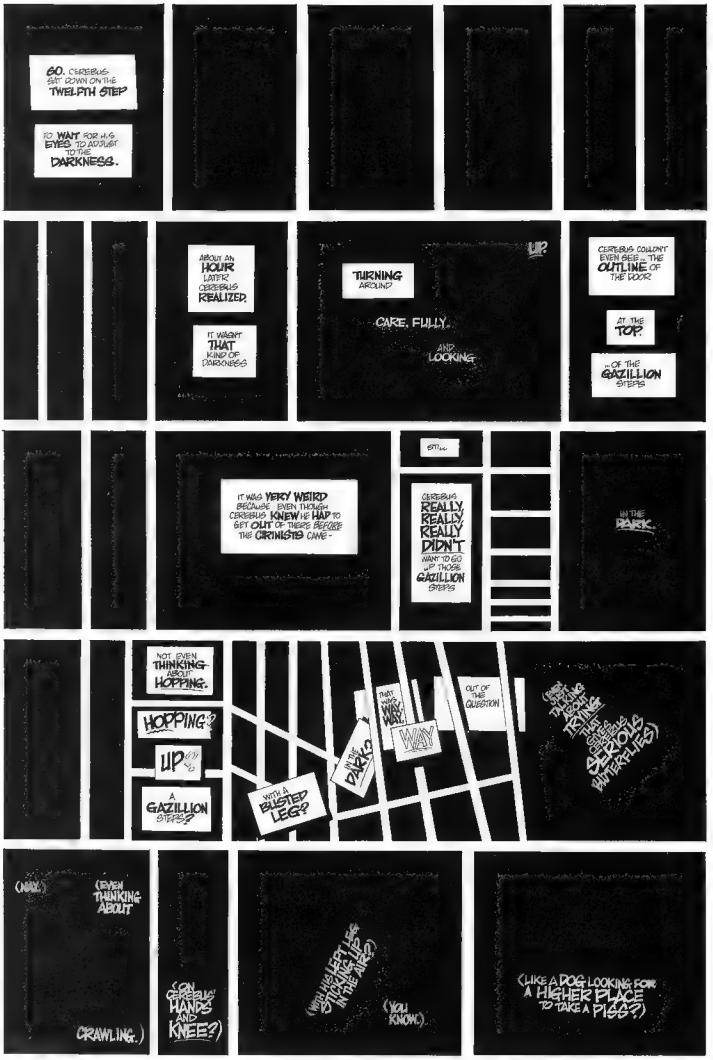

NIP
BASH
CRASH
THUMP
BUMP
WUMP
TINK TINKITY TINK TINK TINK TINK TINK TINK TINK

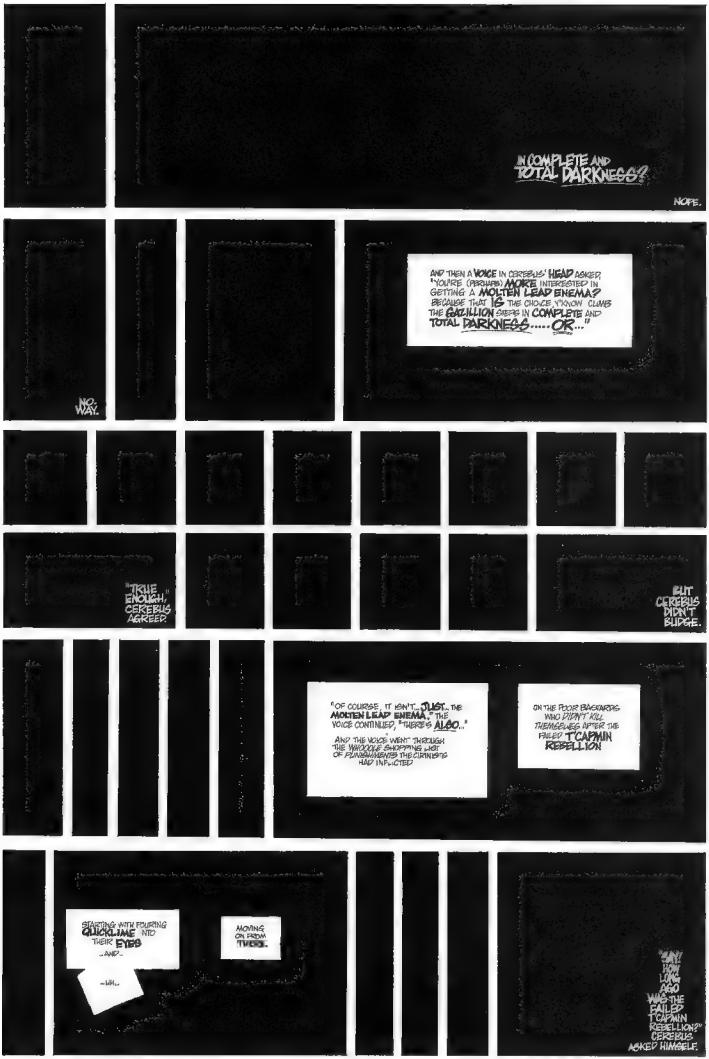

LATER, RECONSTRUCTING WHAT HAD HAPPENED, CEREBUS FIGURED OUT: THAT HE HAD LANDED ON THE BAR...
...WHERE HE HAD BOUNCED ...ONCE...
...TWICE...
...THEN LANDED ON ONE OF THE "STOOLS OF THE BAR... UPON CEREBUS' RIGHT HAND" (RICK 3:24)
SNAPPING ITS LEGS AND DROPPING CEREBUS
HEAD-FIRST ONTO THE CONCRETE STEPS LEADING DOWN INTO THE CRYPT
WHERE (HAVING NO IDEA HOW MUCH TIME HAD PASSED)
CEREBUS (SUDDENLY) "CAME TO..." AND -- LEAPING TO HIS FEET --HE DISCOVERED
EEEEEEEE EEE YOW!
THAT HIS LEFT LEG WAS BROKEN! ...WHICH LED TO THE IMMEDIATE (HOWEOBEIT UNCONSCIOUS) DECISION TO
WUMP.
PASS OUT AGAIN!

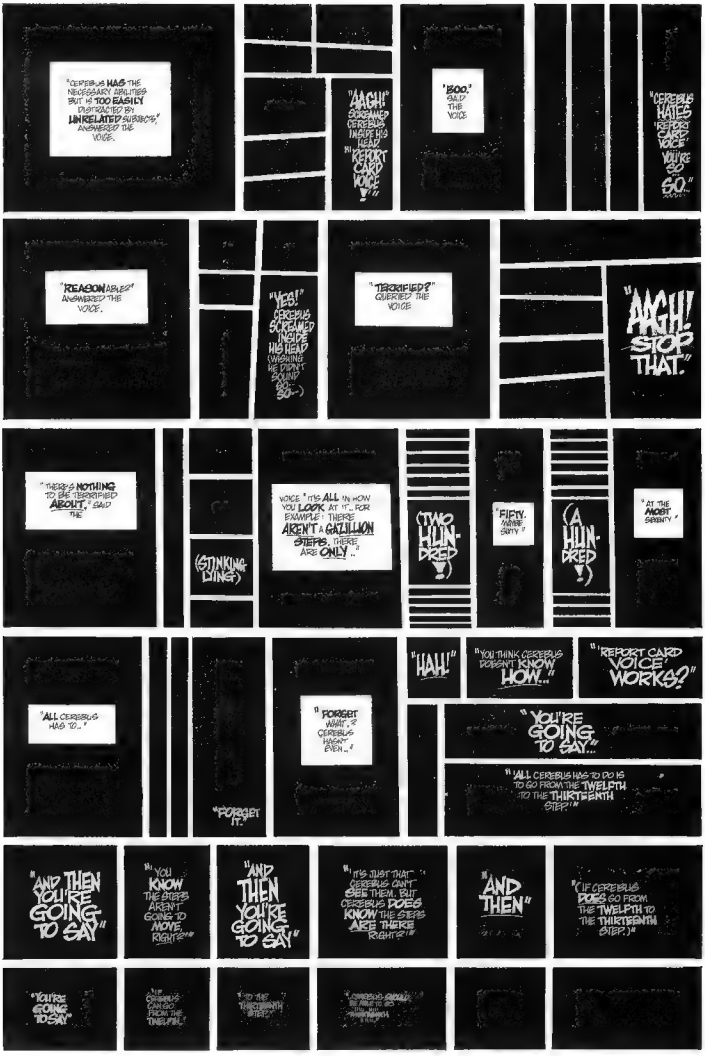

AGAIN (HAVING NO IDEA HOW MUCH TIME HAD PASSED)...
...CEREBUS "CAME TO" WHEN THE FULL MOON WENT BY ONE OF THE UPPER WINDOWS...
...SMACKING CEREBUS...
SNAG!
...RIGHT IN THE EYE.
THIS TIME, CEREBUS GOT TO HIS FEET (OR RATHER--TO HIS FOOT)
HIP.
CAREFULLY.
AND STARTED MAKING HIS WAY...
...CAREFULLY...
HOP.
UP... THE CRYPT STEPS.
HIP.
TRYING NOT TO THINK ABOUT THE FACT THAT (AT THAT VERY MOMENT) THE CIKLINISTS WERE PROBABLY TORTURING KOSHIE, LOSHIE AND MOSHIE...
HOP.
...TO FIND OUT WHERE THEIR RINGLEADER WAS HIDING OUT!
HIP.
TRYING NOT TO THINK ABOUT THAT...
AND TO -- INSTEAD CONCENTRATE ON...
TUMP
...NOT BUMPING HIS BROKEN LEG AGAINST ANYTHING...
...SINCE HE REALLY COULDN'T AFFORD TO PASS OUT AGAIN.
HOP.

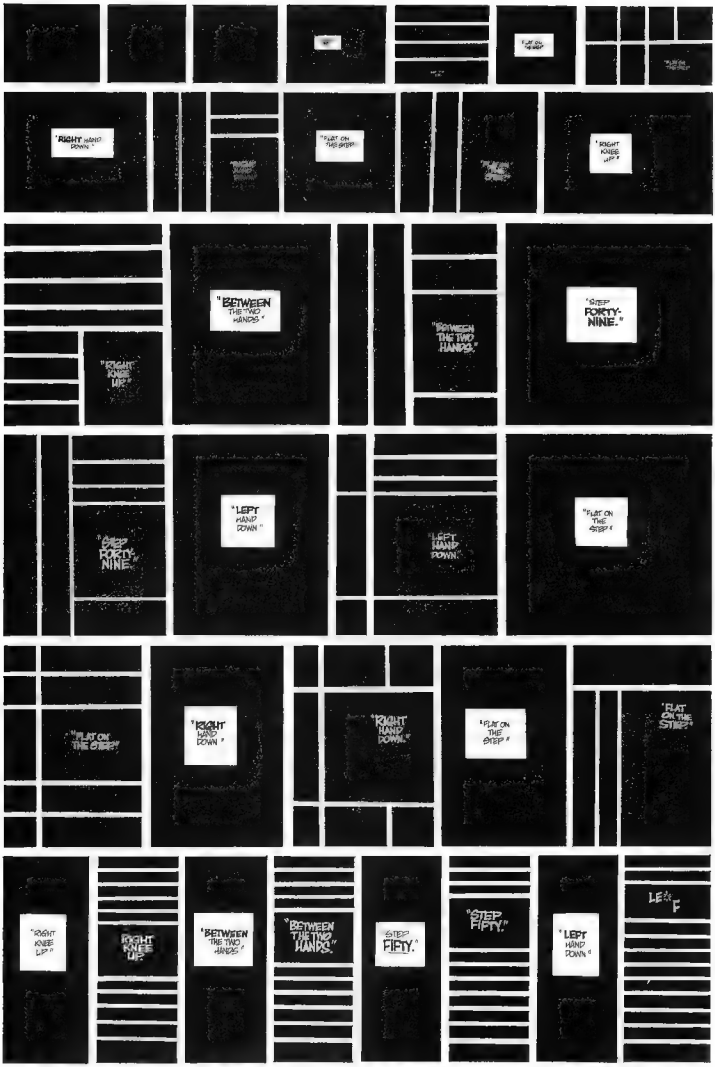

JUST CONCENTRATING ON MAKING IT UP THE CRYPT STEPS
HOP
THEN CONCENTRATING ON MAKING IT ACROSS THE FLOOR OF THE SANCTUARY
THROUGH THE (FORTUNATELY) NON-EXISTENT NORTH WALL
AND (REALLY) JUST TRYING NOT TO THINK ABOUT THE FACT THAT -- ALTHOUGH BEING A RUN-OF-THE-MILL-SEX-CRAZED-CRIMINAL-DEGENERATE-TITTY-BAR-OWNER WAS (UNDER CIRINIST LAW) PUNISHABLE BY SWIFT AND IMMEDIATE EXECUTION --
INCITING ARMED REVOLUTION AGAINST THE CIRINIST AUTHORITIES WAS A DIFFERENT KETTLE OF FISH ENTIRELY.
A KETTLE OF FISH THAT CONTAINED (oooooh) MANY DIFFERENT THINGS --- LIKE (oooooh) DISEMBOWELMENT? AMPUTATIONS? MOLTEN LEAD ENEMAS? AND...
(WELL, AS CEREBUS SAID: CEREBUS WAS TRYING NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT.)
IN FACT, THE ONLY THING CEREBUS WAS ALLOWING HIMSELF TO THINK WAS HE HAD TO GET AWAY FROM THE SANCTUARY
FAST.

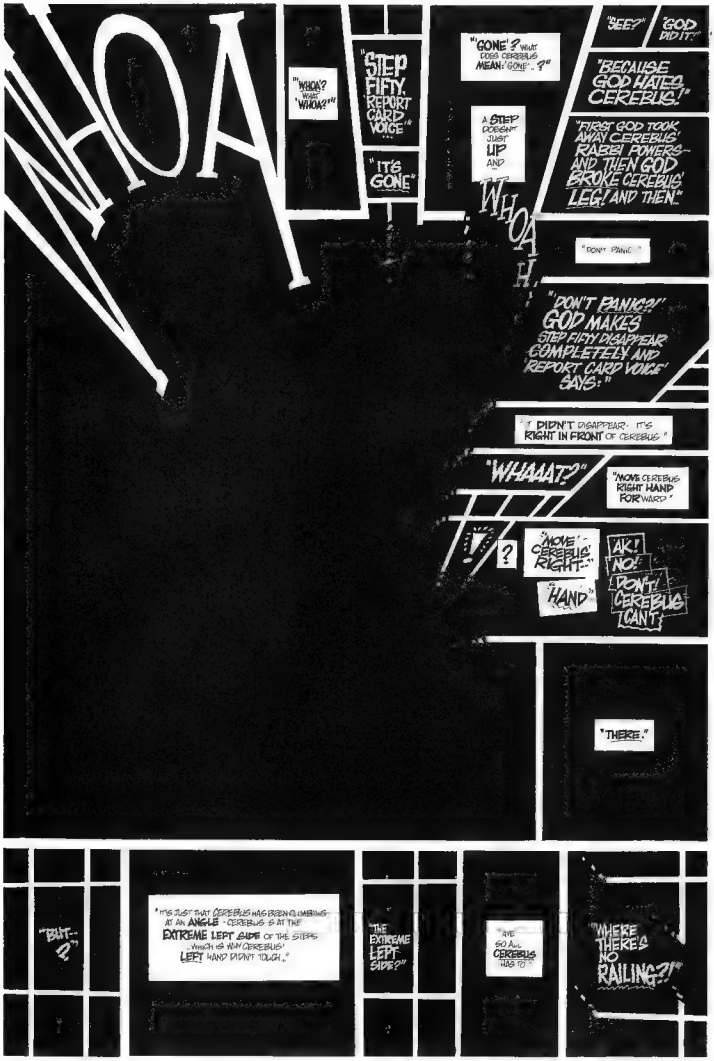

"WHAT COULD BE MORE IMPOSSIBLE," CERBERUS REMEMBERS THINKING TO HIMSELF, "THAN HOPPING -- ON ONE FOOT -- UP A GAZILLION STEPS..."
HIP
"...WHILE NOT THINKING ABOUT A MOLTEN LEAD ENEMA..."
HOP
"...AND WHILE NOT BUMPING YOUR BROKEN LEG:"
BLING!
EEYAAGH
AGAINST ANYTHING..."
WINCE
"...WITH ONLY THE LIGHT FROM THE FULL MOON TO SEE BY..?"
HMMD
CERBERUS HAD JUST GOTTEN TO ABOUT THE TWELFTH STEP...
HOP
WHEN THE FULL MOON...
HIP
...SUDDENLY...
HOP
DISAPPEARED BEHIND THE ROOF OF THE SANCTUARY
"YEP," CERBERUS REMEMBERS THINKING TO HIMSELF,
"YEP... THIS..."
"...IS DEFINITELY..."
"...MORE IMPOSSIBLE."

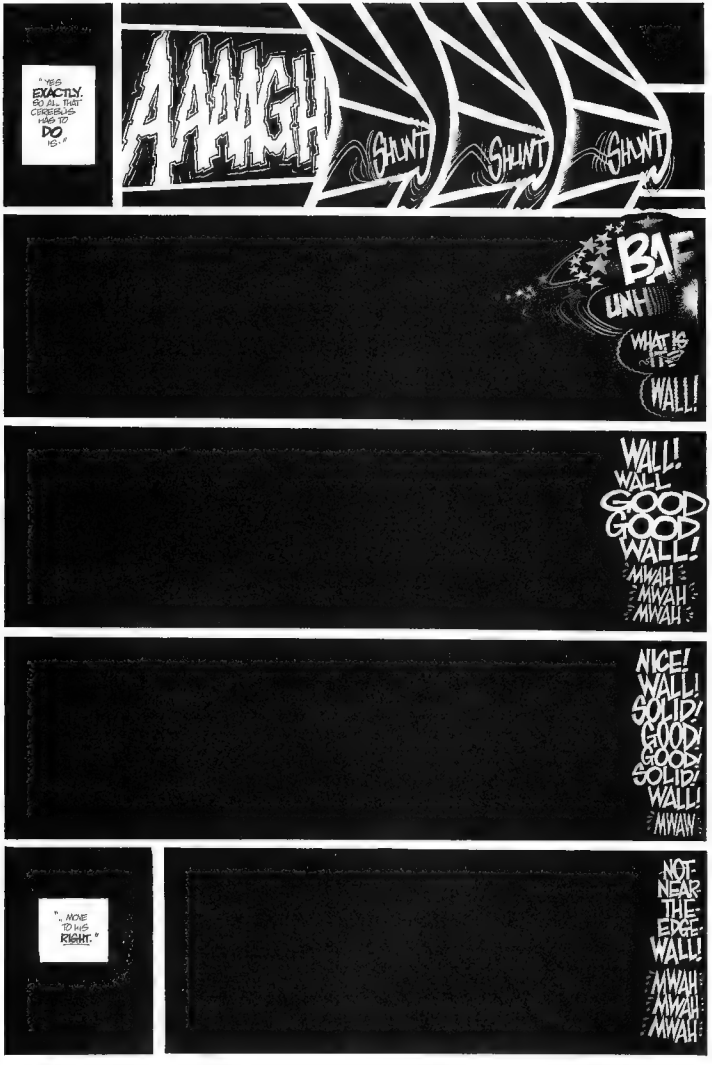

SO. CERBERUS SAT DOWN ON THE TWELFTH STEP
TO WAIT FOR HIS EYES TO ADJUST TO THE DARKNESS.
ABOUT AN HOUR LATER CERBERUS REALIZED.
IT WASN'T THAT KIND OF DARKNESS
UP
TURNING AROUND
CAREFULLY.
AND LOOKING
CERBERUS COULDN'T EVEN SEE THE OUTLINE OF THE DOOR
AT THE TOP
OF THE GAZILLION STEPS
IT WAS VERY WEIRD BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH CERBERUS KNEW HE HAD TO GET OUT OF THERE BEFORE THE CRITNISTS CAME -
STILL
CERBERUS REALLY, REALLY, REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO GO UP THOSE GAZILLION STEPS
IN THE PARK.
NOT EVEN THINKING ABOUT HOPPING.
HOPPING UP A GAZILLION STEPS?
WITH A BUSTED LEG?
IN THE PARK?
THAT WAY?
WAY
OUT OF THE QUESTION
(SORT OF TRAPPED UNDER THE STAIRS BY ARROWS & WATERLILIES)
(WALK.)
(EVEN THINKING ABOUT CRAWLING.)
(ON CREEPILY HANDS AND KNEES?)
(WHILE WE'RE STUCK IN THE AIR?)
(YOU KNOW.)
(LIKE A DOG LOOKING FOR A HIGHER PLACE TO TAKE A PISS?)

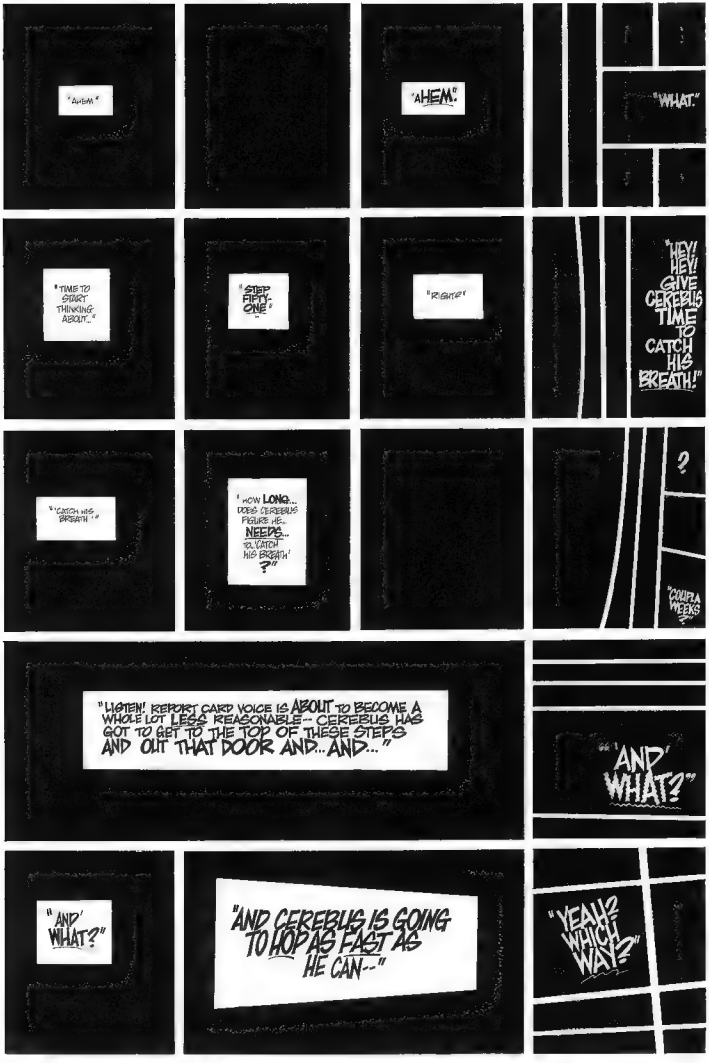

IN COMPLETE AND TOTAL DARKNESS?
NOPE.
NO WAY.
AND THEN A VOICE IN CERBERUS' HEAD ASKED, "YOU'RE (PERHAPS) MORE INTERESTED IN GETTING A MOLTEN LEAD ENEMA? BECAUSE THAT IS THE CHOICE, YOU'VE CLIMB THE GAZILLION STEPS IN COMPLETE AND TOTAL DARKNESS.....OR..."
"TRUE ENOUGH," CERBERUS AGREED.
BUT CERBERUS DIDN'T BLINK.
"OF COURSE IT ISN'T... JUST... THE MOLTEN LEAD ENEMA," THE VOICE CONTINUED, "THERE'S ALSO..."
AND THE VOICE WENT THROUGH THE WHOOOLE SHOPPING LIST OF PUNISHMENTS THE CURATORS HAD INFLICTED
ON THE POOR BACKWORDS WHO DIDN'T KILL THEMSELVES AFTER THE FAILED T'CAPMIN REBELLION
STARTING WITH POURING QUICKLIME INTO THEIR EYES
...AND...
-UH...
MOVING ON FROM THERE.
"SAY! HOW LONG AGO WAS THE FAILED T'CAPMIN REBELLION?" CERBERUS ASKED HIMSELF.

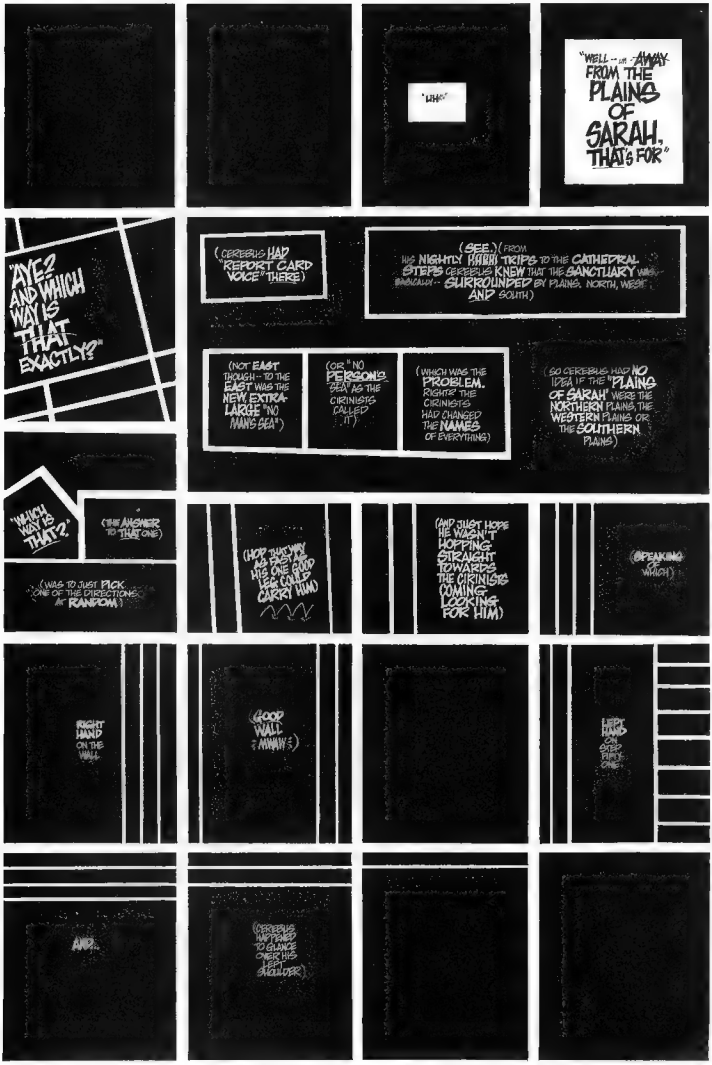

"CERBERUS HAS THE NECESSARY BRUTISH BUT IS TOO EASILY DISTRACTED BY UNRELATED CURIOSITY," ANSWERED THE VOICE.
"AAGH!" SCREAMED CERBERUS INSIDE HIS HEAD. "REPORT CARD VOICE!"
"BOO," SAID THE VOICE.
"CERBERUS HATES 'REPORT CARD VOICE.' YOU'RE SO... SO..."
"REASONABLE?" ANSWERED THE VOICE.
"YES!" CERBERUS SCREAMED INSIDE HIS HEAD (WASHING HIS DON'T SOUND SO SO...)
"TERRIFIED?" QUERIED THE VOICE
"AAGH! STOP THAT."
"THERE'S NOTHING TO BE TERRIFIED ABOUT," SAID THE
(STINKING LYING)
VOICE. "IT'S ALL IN HOW YOU LOOK AT IT... FOR EXAMPLE: THERE AREN'T A GAZILLION STEPS. THERE ARE ONLY..."
(TWO HUNDRED!)
"FIFTY. MAYBE SIXTY."
(A HUNDRED!)
"AT THE MOST SEVENTY."
"ALL CERBERUS HAS TO..."
"FORGET IT."
"FORGET WHAT IF CERBERUS HASN'T EVEN..."
"HAH!"
"YOU THINK CERBERUS DOESN'T KNOW HOW..."
"'REPORT CARD VOICE' WORKS?"
"YOU'RE GOING TO SAY..."
"ALL CERBERUS HAS TO DO IS TO GO FROM THE TWELFTH TO THE THIRTEENTH STEP!"
"AND THEN YOU'RE GOING TO SAY"
"YOU KNOW THE STEPS AREN'T GOING TO MOVE, RIGHT?"
"AND THEN YOU'RE GOING TO SAY"
"IT'S JUST THAT CERBERUS CAN'T SEE THEM. BUT CERBERUS DOES KNOW THE STEPS ARE THERE, RIGHT?"
"AND THEN"
"(IF CERBERUS DOES GO FROM THE TWELFTH TO THE THIRTEENTH STEP.)"
"YOU'RE GOING TO SAY"
"IF CERBERUS CAN GO FROM THE TWELFTH,"
"TO THE THIRTEENTH STEP?"

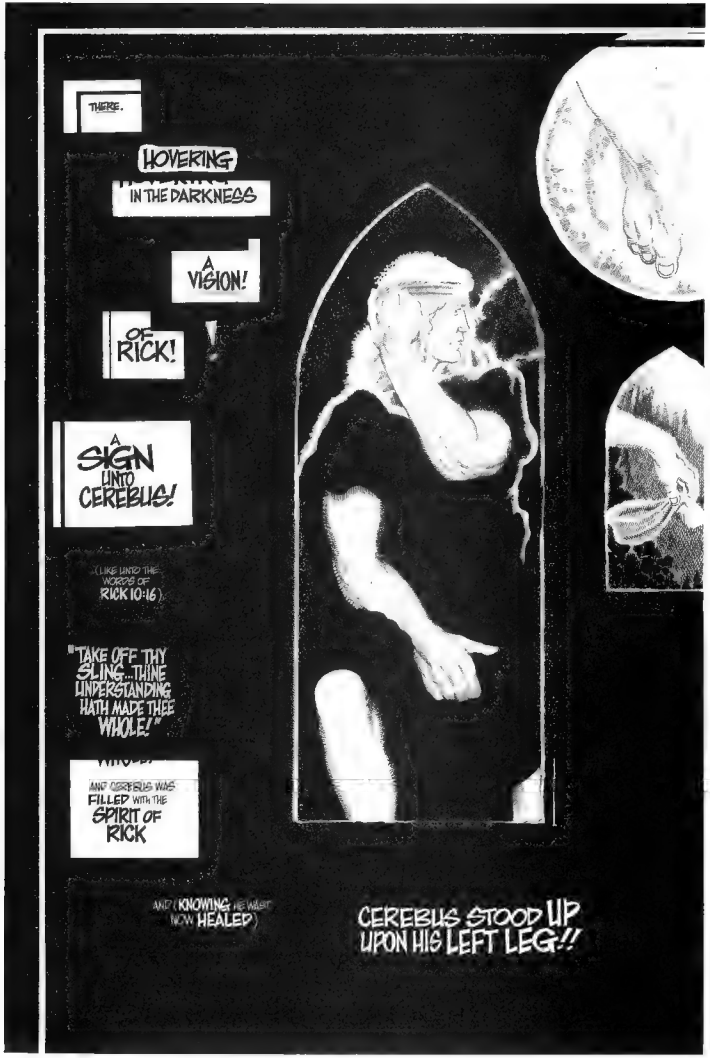

"RIGHT HAND DOWN."
"FLAT ON THE STEP."
"RIGHT KNEE UP."
"BETWEEN THE TWO HANDS."
"BETWEEN THE TWO HANDS."
"STEP FORTY-NINE."
"RIGHT KNEE UP."
"STEP FORTY-NINE."
"LEFT HAND DOWN."
"LEFT HAND DOWN."
"FLAT ON THE STEP."
"FLAT ON THE STEP."
"RIGHT HAND DOWN."
"RIGHT HAND DOWN."
"FLAT ON THE STEP."
"FLAT ON THE STEP."
"RIGHT KNEE UP."
"RIGHT KNEE UP."
"BETWEEN THE TWO HANDS."
"BETWEEN THE TWO HANDS."
"STEP FIFTY."
"STEP FIFTY."
"LEFT HAND DOWN."
LE F

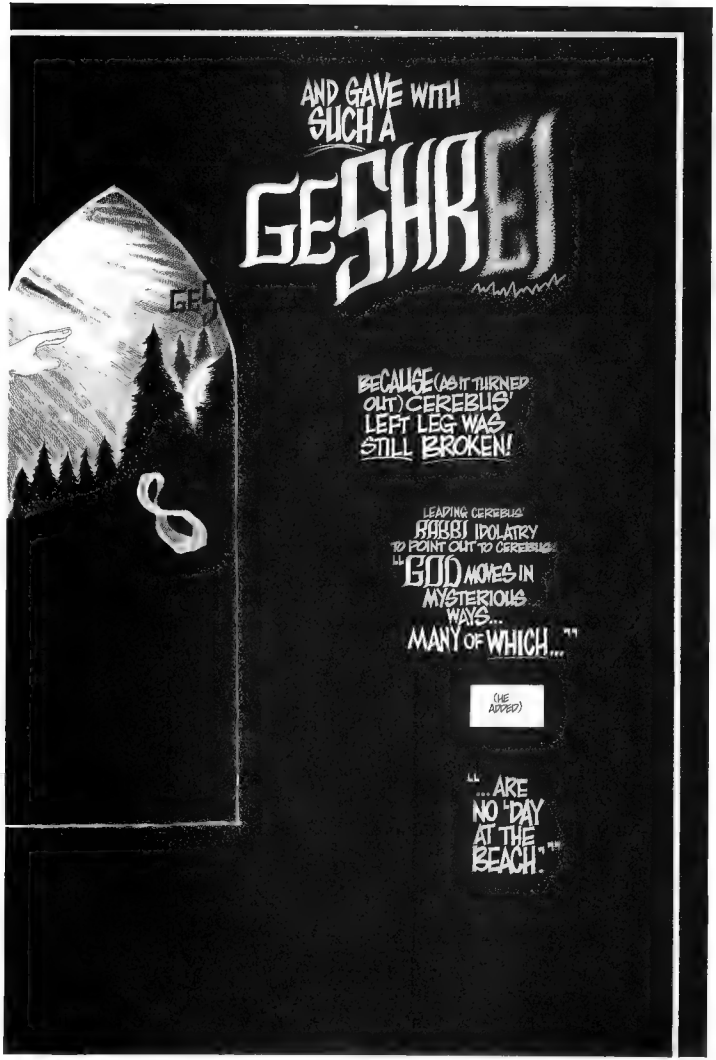

WHOA!
"WHOA? WHAT WHOA?!"
"STEP FIFTY, REPORT CARD VOICE"
"IT'S GONE"
"GONE"? WHAT DOES CEREBUS MEAN: "GONE"...?"
A STEP DOESN'T JUST UP AND
WHOA
"SEE?"
"GOD DID IT."
"BECAUSE GOD HATED CEREBUS."
"FIRST GOD TOOK AWAY CEREBUS' RABBI POWERS— AND THEN GOD BROKE CEREBUS' LEG! AND THEN..."
"DON'T PANIC."
"DON'T PANIC?!" GOD MAKES STEP FIFTY DISAPPEAR COMPLETELY AND 'REPORT CARD VOICE' SAYS: "
"IT DIDN'T DISAPPEAR. IT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF CEREBUS."
"WHAAAT?"
"MOVE CEREBUS RIGHT HAND FORWARD."
!
?
"MOVE CEREBUS RIGHT--"
"HAND"
AK! NO! DON'T CEREBUS I CAN'T
"THERE."
"BUT--?"
"IT'S JUST THAT CEREBUS HAS BEEN CLIMBING AT AN ANGLE - CEREBUS IS AT THE EXTREME LEFT SIDE OF THE STEPS WHICH IS WHY CEREBUS' LEFT HAND DIDN'T TOUCH."
"THE EXTREME LEFT SIDE?"
"WE GO ALL CEREBUS HAS TO?"
"WHERE THERE'S NO RAILING?!"

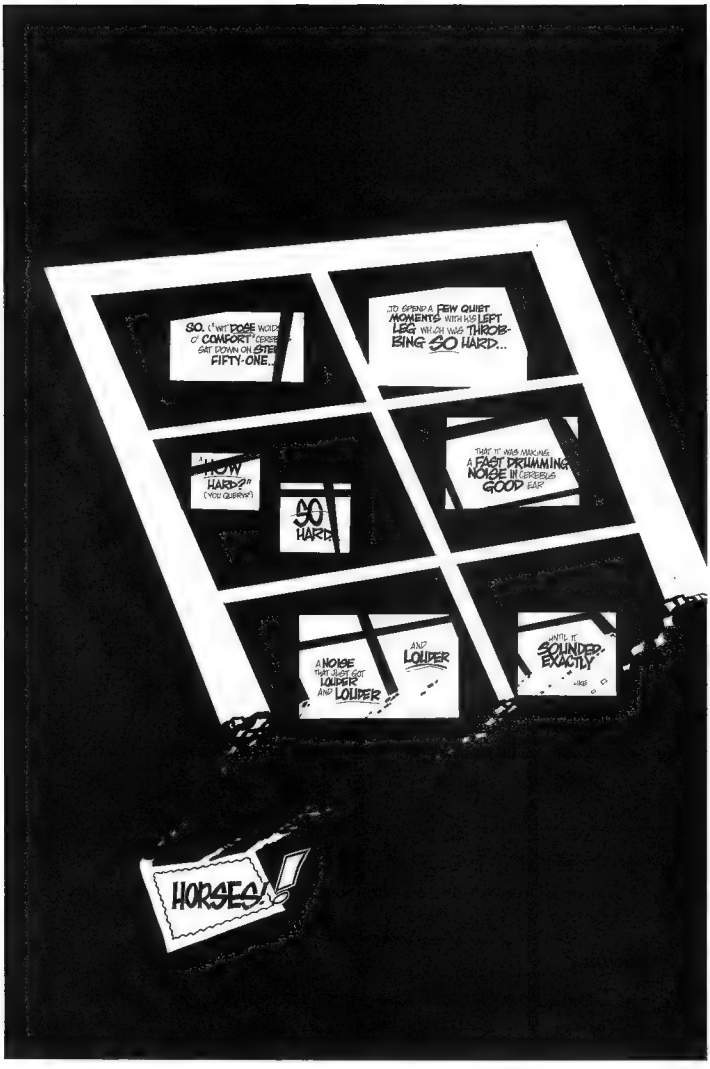

"YES. EXACTLY. SO ALL THAT CERBERUS HAS TO DO IS-"
AAAGH
SHUNT
SHUNT
SHUNT
BAF
UNH
WHAT IS IT?
WALL!
WALL! WALL
GOOD GOOD WALL!
MWAH MWAH MWAH
NICE! WALL! SOLID! GOOD! GOOD! SOLID! WALL!
MWAH
"...MOVE TO HIS RIGHT."
NOT NEAR THE EDGE. WALL!
MWAH MWAH MWAH


"AHEM."
"AHEM."
"WHAT."
"TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT..."
"STEP FIFTY-ONE."
"RIGHT."
"HEY! HEY! GIVE CEREBUS TIME TO CATCH HIS BREATH!"
"'CATCH HIS BREATH.'"
"HOW LONG... DOES CEREBUS FIGURE HE... NEEDS... TO 'CATCH HIS BREATH'?"
?
"COUPLA WEEKS."
"LISTEN! REPORT CARD VOICE IS ABOUT TO BECOME A WHOLE LOT LESS REASONABLE-- CEREBUS HAS GOT TO GET TO THE TOP OF THESE STEPS AND OUT THAT DOOR AND...AND..."
"'AND' WHAT?"
"'AND' WHAT?"
"AND CEREBUS IS GOING TO HOP AS FAST AS HE CAN--"
"YEAH? WHICH WAY?"


"LHA"
"WELL -- UH -- AWAY FROM THE PLAINS OF SARAH, THAT'S FOR"
"AYE? AND WHICH WAY IS THAT EXACTLY?"
(CERBERUS HAD "REPORT CARD VOICE" THERE)
(SEE.) (FROM HIS NIGHTLY PARRI TRIPS TO THE CATHEDRAL STEPS CERBERUS KNEW THAT THE SANCTUARY WAS BASICALLY -- SURROUNDED BY PLAINS. NORTH, WEST AND SOUTH)
(NOT EAST THOUGH -- TO THE EAST WAS THE NEW, EXTRA-LARGE "NO MAN'S SEA")
(OR "NO PERSON'S SEA" AS THE CIRINISTS CALLED IT)
(WHICH WAS THE PROBLEM. RIGHT? THE CIRINISTS HAD CHANGED THE NAMES OF EVERYTHING)
SO CERBERUS HAD NO IDEA IF THE "PLAINS OF SARAH" WERE THE NORTHERN PLAINS, THE WESTERN PLAINS OR THE SOUTHERN PLAINS)
"WHICH WAY IS "THAT"?"
(THE ANSWER TO "THAT" ONE)
(WAS TO JUST PICK ONE OF THE DIRECTIONS AT RANDOM.)
(HOP JUST MY ASS FACE MISS ONE AND I'LL BE GOOD)
(AND JUST HOPE HE WASN'T HOPPING STRAIGHT TOWARDS THE CIRINISTS COMING LOOKING FOR HIM)
(SPEAKING OF WHICH)
RIGHT HAND ON THE WALL
(GOOD WALL. STAY AWAY.)
LEFT HAND ON SIDE FIFTY ONE
AND.
(CERBERUS HAD PAUSED TO GLANCE OVER HIS LEFT SHOULDER)


THERE.
HOVERING
IN THE DARKNESS
A VISION!
OF RICK!
A SIGN UNTO CEREBUS!
(LIKE UNTO THE WORDS OF RICK 10:16)
"TAKE OFF THY SLING...THINE UNDERSTANDING HATH MADE THEE WHOLE!"
AND CEREBUS WAS FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF RICK
AND (KNOWING HE MUST NOW HEALED)
CEREBUS STOOD UP UPON HIS LEFT LEG!!


AND GAVE WITH SUCH A
GESHREI
BECAUSE (AS IT TURNED OUT) CEREBUS' LEFT LEG WAS STILL BROKEN!
LEADING CEREBUS' RABBI IDOLATRY TO POINT OUT TO CEREBUS
"GOD MOVES IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS... MANY OF WHICH..."
(HE ADDED)
"... ARE NO 'DAY AT THE BEACH.'"


SO, (WITH POISE WORTHY OF COMFORT) CERBERUS SAT DOWN ON STEP FIFTY-ONE..
JD SPENT A FEW QUIET MOMENTS WITH HIS LEFT LEG WHICH WAS THROBBING SO HARD..
"HOW HARD?" (YOU QUERY?)
SO HARD..
THAT IT WAS MAKING A FAST DRUMMING NOISE IN CERBERUS GOOD EAR
A NOISE THAT JUST GOT LOUDER AND LOUDER
AND LOUDER
UNTIL IT SOUNDED EXACTLY LIKE
HORSES!!

(originally scheduled for publication in *Cerebus* 272)

review

IS DAVE BRADY *ACTUALLY* GAY?

What I saw as an auspicious beginning to a "civilized discourse" across heterosexualist (me) and homosexualist (them) lines— represented by Jonathan Freeman's letter in Cerebus 269 *and Margaret Liss' letter in 272—came to an abrupt end with the arrival of a...jaunty...little note from a Dave Brady of Newport, Virginia informing me that he is a long-time* Cerebus *reader (since issue 21; giving him six issues of seniority over the aforementioned Mr. Freeman) and enclosing two copies of* Reading Cerebus, *a one-off (as they say in England) publication subtitled* Cerebus: Going Homo. *In his letter Mr. Brady rather...jauntily...tells me to consider the publication as a "longish Letter to the Editor. Enjoy!" Somewhat* less *jauntily, the inside front cover advises—presumably me (as the only likely plaintiff)—that the publication is "A Parody produced under protections afforded to parodies by the First Amendment of (sic) the Constitution of the United States of America and upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States of America". Since the publication date is listed as July, 2001, I think it safe to assume that it is the First Amendment to the Constitution which the Supreme Court has upheld and not* Cerebus: Going Homo *itself.*

Mr. Brady needn't have "de-jauntied" himself on my account. In the aftermath of "Tangent" and "Dear Jeff Smith" when I was being cybernetically tarred-and-feathered in absentia, *the only one of my professional peers to contact me was Bill Willingham. In the course of letting me know the extent to which I was being dragged through the cobblestone streets of the Internet, bruised and scourged in the Manner Endemic to the Good People of the Global Cybernetic Village (said contact being, as I say, one-of-a-kind it was very much appreciated—and is still appreciated. Thanks, Bill) he offered the opinion that—if there was anyone who deserved a rap in the mouth it was himself and that I was free to take the first swing at him the next time I saw him at a convention. I had no idea what he was talking about. He explained that if he had known that* the Comics Journalistas *intended to run a cartoon depicting me as a concentration camp commander in the (what I like to call) "Dave Sim is a Nazi" issue of that publication he would never have allowed them to use the cover caricature he did of me. It was a "stand up guy" thing to say, and I told him how much I appreciated his saying it. But I am a firm believer in the First Amendment. I have never—and would never—take legal action against anyone for saying anything about me or depicting me in however negative a light. I don't even take issue with Jeff Smith lying and saying that he threatened to give me a fat lip. That's a whole other area. I'll force him to back up his lies with actions (or prove himself, in my eyes—as he is doing now— to be a coward), but I would never sue him or deny him the right to say anything about me that takes his fancy.*

I've never done a SPOILER WARNING *before, so I'm really rather excited. Ahem. Hem.*

SPOILER WARNING: the rest of this review gives away the ending and much of the plot of Cerebus: Going Homo. *If you intend to purchase Mr. Brady's publication, please read no further.*

Okay?

It turns out that Dave Sim is gay.

You think you're *surprised?*

I was, to say the least, doubtful myself. But there the irrefutable evidence is, before my very eyes, in amateurish desktop publishing replete with ugly, ill-considered font sizes and column widths in Cerebus' *own Times New Roman, torturous composition seldom seen outside the confines of* The Comics Journal *and* (even) *a colour photocopy cover.*

Ger's and my working vacation in Gainesville, Florida in 1986? I was certain that my motivation was to spend a small portion of the six-figure proceeds from the first printing of the High Society *trade paperback to winter in close proximity to the happy hunting grounds of the co-ed population of the University of Florida (Go Gators!). Alas, such proves not to be the case. It seems that Ger and I were on our honeymoon. Not really a honeymoon because (apparently) Gerhard* isn't *gay (this came as something of a relief both to myself, to Ger and, I rather suppose, to his wife, Rose). So (as best I understand) it was some sort of unrequited love affair on my part. Thinking back to Florida, what I recall is finding exactly what I was looking for in the arms (most notably) of an almost unimaginably cute little blonde waitress who worked in the hotel's semi-elegant restaurant (on the one hand it was a Hilton, on the other it was, you know, Gainesville), the girl singer in the band that was playing in the hotel lounge (she showed up at my door with two bottles of* Perrier-Jouet *a customer had attempted to ply her with) and, less notably, a co-ed or two in the bars that Ger and I frequented. I thought—until* Reading Cerebus—*that I was "score-boarding", sleeping with as many women as I could in order to get my "numbers" up above two dozen (I departed Gainesville with a net gain of three—possibly four) (I was drunk and I'm not certain if I managed to keep my feet "in bounds")(as it were) (on that fourth one). I must've, instead, (judging by the irrefutable evidence Mr. Brady presents) been trying to make Gerhard jealous...or...repentant...or something. "If I can't have you, I shall throw away my masculine charms upon these...these...strumpets!"*

Although I don't recall ever taking a photograph of Gerhard, I am informed that I am (secretly) "Gerhard's camera". That is, those photos credited to "Gerhard's camera" (which I always thought meant that Gerhard had

taken the picture himself, using the camera's automatic timer—more the fool I) were actually taken by myself. It seems—while I was recklessly advertising my one-sided "honeymoon" in full process colour on the back covers of Cerebus*—that I had a sudden attack of paranoid discretion when it came to admitting my feverish need to compulsively snap photographs of my unrequited paramour. Thus: photo by Gerhard's camera. Or, rather, "camera".*

Still not convinced? You are a hard case.

Consider then, my contribution to AARGH! (Artists Against Rampant Government Homophobia) *described—rather disingenuously—by Mr. Brady as a "little known British publication" and the, to Mr. Brady, irrefutably homosexual nature of my and Gerhard's contribution. Mr. Brady is attempting to be discrete here, but I confess that this was when the full import of his thesis struck home, shattering my illusion that the principals involved in* AARGH! *were...well...principles. Principles of opposing the Thatcher-era imposition of totalitarian laws encroaching upon individual expression and privacy.*

Alan Moore's own self-publishing imprint, Mad Love, for which I designed the logo, was the publisher of AARGH! *So clearly, I am deluding* myself *that my contribution was an attempt to fight on the side of the angels against the imposition of totalitarian measures directed against a societal minority...evading what is most plain to Mr. Brady: that the only reason to contribute to such a project is because one is oneself, in actual fact, gay. Well, by just so irrefutable a progression from effect to cause, it seems inescapable that Alan Moore, himself, as the initiator and the ringleader of the* AARGH! *project must be gay. And there was another contributor to* AARGH! *unnamed by Mr. Brady. A certain...* Mr. Frank Miller!

I felt the floor lurch a bit beneath my feet. Frank Miller? Gay? His...what?...twenty-year long relationship with Lynn Varley a sham? A façade? I envisioned the happy couple (make that the "happy" "couple") in their Manhattan apartment (perhaps at that very moment) watching television, when—suddenly—the pederasty so long suppressed within him bursts forth with full volcanic fury as Frank leaps to his feet and fairly screams, "I HAVE TO SUCK SOMEONE'S COCK!!! NOWWWW!!!!" leaving one of those Warner Bros. Cartoon outlines of himself in the living room wall as he hurtles in the direction of wherever-it-is-the-Boys-in-the-Band-are-"playing"-in-the-Big-Apple-these-days.

And then I thought about Eddie Campbell.

Why, I flew halfway around the world to see Eddie Campbell! Oh, sure, to try to talk him into self-publishing and to work on a Bacchus/Cerebus crossover and to go to OZCON. That's what I told *myself, anyway. But, if there was anything I was learning from* Reading Cerebus *it was to recognize the manifold, nay, the virtually* uncountable *layers of completely transparent self-deception and evasion through which I viewed the events that made up my life.*

And not only my real *life. My creative life, too, was (as they used to say) as queer as a three-dollar bill. The Oscar Wilde/Rick/Jaka triangle in* Jaka's Story*? It turns out that that's me, Ger and Rose. No word on who Cerebus is. A small oversight on Mr. Brady's part, but I'm more than willing to bet that whoever the Cerebus of* Jaka's Story *turns out to be it will be someone who is a) gay and b) in denial about being gay. I eagerly await Mr. Brady's sequel which will, I'm sure, set the record straight (or gay as the case may be).*

Pardon my digression. I'm sure it has to do with residual denial about my being gay. Just another transparent evasion.

Why, I practically abducted the esteemed Mr. Campbell from hearth and home, from the very bosom of his family and paid for adjoining hotel rooms (it is only in reading Reading Cerebus *that I have come to recognize the so-pregnant-with-significance-its-metaphorical-water-is-breaking of the term: "*hotel rooms*") so we could work on the story over a period of two or three days! Oh sure, the house in which the Space Family Campbell resided in those pre-*From Hell*-movie-money-mansion days could barely contain Anne and the kids, let alone a visitor—but that's just the cover story. Consider the fact that Eddie Campbell keeps himself in good physical condition, that he has close-cropped hair.* And *that he wears glasses! If you had asked me prior to reading Mr. Brady's treatise what had happened in those adjoining hotel rooms, I would have said that Eddie and I wrote and drew the Bacchus/Cerebus crossover that he self-published in the first issue of* Bacchus*. That we drank ourselves silly in a number of pubs and taverns. And that was pretty much it. Now,* Now! *Having been exposed to the manifold levels of my predatory skulduggery, I'm not so sure. Consider the name of the story: "Crossing Over". You know, like "cross-dressing" or...or...crossing over from pretending to being a heterosexualist to admitting that you're a homosexualist. Or the subtitle of the story, "The Face on the Barroom Floor" all about a heartbroken artist pining for his dead wife. That must be me and Gerhard! Okay, Ger wasn't my wife and he wasn't dead, but if there is anything one learns from the Dave Brady's of this world it is that metaphors are seldom as apparent on their surface as we need them to be. What is required is to first possess an irrefutable template/thesis: "Dave Sim is gay and is in denial about being gay" and then to determinedly shape anything that comes to hand to fit that template—most especially if it doesn't in any way* seem *to fit! Well, that's the only way to separate all these crafty pseudo-heterosexualist obfuscations from the self-evident gay truth.*

What? You're still not convinced?

Consider the hot tub photo. According to Mr. Brady, that's me in the hot tub with Gerhard. Again, if you had asked me a few weeks ago about the hot tub, I would have said that I wasn't at that party. But, the thing of it is, I don't know where I was that I wasn't *at the hot tub party! What a transparent tissue of lies, I realize! If I wasn't at the hot tub party, then where was I? A signing? A convention? Out with one of my "beards" (as Mr. Brady*

calls them—my girlfriends) (or, rather, "girlfriends")(with whom I cunningly staged back cover photos so as to divert suspicion from whatever it was Ger and I were up to in our) (wink wink nudge nudge)(hotel rooms). I'm not sure what *we were up to (or* could be*—even theoretically—up to, since Gerhard isn't gay according to Mr. Brady's thesis) but one thing I* am *sure of, now that I have read* Reading Cerebus, *whatever we* were *up to (however innocent it may appear on the surface) it was just another significant piece of evidence leading to the inescapable conclusion that I'm secretly gay. Maybe we were playing our "Gerhard's camera" game? Mr. Brady's sequel grows more enticing by the minute.*

Of course, I just realized. That's Eric Hanek in the hot tub. Again, the floor lurches beneath my feet. Eric Hanek is GAY? It's true his marriage did just break up. And he is *in a hot tub with Gerhard. I mean, they're both in the hot tub. Which means they're, you know, in a hot tub together. On the other hand, Eric does have a son, Ben. But, then, that's not unheard of, is it? Lots of gay men don't know they're gay! Why, until* Reading Cerebus *came in, I didn't have any idea that* I *was gay. (I know, a likely story. At some level I must've known all along). Now—to a heterosexualist—that just seems, you know, stupid. How brain-dead do you have to be to be married for twenty years and father two or three kids and not know that you're actually gay? Back when* I *was a heterosexualist (or back when I—hah!—"thought" I was) it always struck me as being analogous to the one third of women who (reportedly) don't know if they've ever had an orgasm. Back when I was—excuse me—when I* thought *I was a heterosexualist I put those things in the "Duh!" category. You know:*

Question: What is my sexual preference? Answer: Duh!

Question: Have I ever had an orgasm? Answer: Duh!

You know. I...I...miss that already. Miss it terribly. Getting (as Jack Nicholson puts it) "a serious chubby" when a twenty-year-old with great breasts leans over and I can see (as John Belushi put it) "every part of Christmas". Of course that only happened last night at the club that I go to, but it's really just a matter of time, isn't it? I can go on pretending to be interested in firm, young female flesh, the hair that has been lavished with attention until it shines like spun gold, those firm (as in "un-sagging", *as in* "un-wrinkled") *and enticing post-adolescent contours and parabolic curves. The two girls last night leap to mind—bet they weren't a day over nineteen. "Ouch. No fair looking like Sharyn AND Judith". Judith when she was fifteen. Sharyn when she was nineteen. Judith is thirty-one, now. Sharyn is thirty-four. But who am I kidding? Certainly not Dave Brady. Soon, I'll have to start going to gay clubs. Soon, I'll have to find a boyfriend.*

****

I don't want to leave you with the impression that I found Brady's Reading Cerebus *completely without value. If it is true that his aptitudes for composing witty repartee (*Reading Cerebus *is structured as a dialogue between David, Gore and Tom—David Brady, Gore Vidal and Tom Wolfe) are about on par with his aptitudes for page composition, typography and layout (that is to say, virtually indiscernible) still there were a few nuggets of information interspersed throughout the tedious and conventional homosexualisms (when does he use "methinks he doth protest too much"? I wondered to myself. It has to be in here somewhere. No homosexualist can write for longer than three pages about a heterosexualist asserting his heterosexuality without using...ah, here it is. Page twelve. Page three if he had used something smaller than an eye chart sized font). On page 11 we are informed that "As long as they don't do it in the street and scare the horses" was actually said by (or attributed to; Brady knows how to hedge his bets) a Mrs. Patrick Campbell who is identified as a friend of George Bernard Shaw. Brady's feminist bedfellows will be slapping his pee-pee over the use of Mrs. Campbell's husband's name in identifying her, and for the implication that her only status derives from her acquaintanceship with Shaw. Anyway, the actual quote is reputed to be:* "my dear, I don't care what they do, as long as they don't do it in the street and frighten the horses." *If Brady's attribution is accurate, then it is an interesting bit of trivia. Of course Brady makes my misattributing the quote to Buffalo Bill or Butch Cassidy (which is, I swear, how I heard it) into a voodoo profession litmus test proof of my closeted gay status. I think you have to be a feminist, a homosexualist or a member of the voodoo profession to see the cause-and-effect there, because it quite escapes me, I'm afraid. Also, having gone through the convolutions of attribution for "writing about art is like dancing about architecture" in these pages a few years back, it would not surprise me if there exists no universal consensus—but rather a plethora of candidates—for the justifiable honour of being recognized as the indisputable originator of that particular* bon mot.

The Tom Wolfe character's obsession with his own writing verges on mildly humorous from time to time. "Gore-not-Vidal" is indicting me for having read his work:

Gore: …he's read me, Capote, Kerouac *(not true, by the way)* Whitman *(also not true),* Wilde, and he's read Williams. By his own admission he rushed out to read Burroughs *(also not true. I saved* Naked Lunch *as one of the reputed great works of literature and found it to be—I didn't characterize it this way at the time, but I do so now—unreadable gay pornographic tripe).* How many writers do you know who have read not only my *City and the Pillar* but also my *Judgement of Paris* and read them closely enough that they would find it noteworthy enough to praise the last two paragraphs of the book? How about you, Tom, do you even know what the last two paragraphs of *The Judgement of Paris* are about?

Tom: Say, he didn't mention anything *I* wrote did he?

See? Mildly amusing. I might be wrong, but I think the two closing paragraphs of The Judgement of Paris *are about the sudden and unexpected thunderclap of "love at first sight" occurring to someone (the book's narrator) who has never experienced love firsthand. Brady's implication—through his Gore character—seems to be that you have to be gay to understand the meaning of those two paragraphs. That, it seems to me, unnecessarily undervalues—and, in fact, "gay ghetto-izes" Gore Vidal's writing on the book (writing of which, from what I understand from Vidal's autobiography,* Palimpsest, *the author is still very proud—insofar as it represented a conscious—and successful— sea change in his writing style to that time).*

Then there's a quote attributed to George Bernard Shaw's (or "Mrs. Patrick Campbell's friend" as I shall think of him from now on) Unreasonable Man.

"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

I find that to be an interesting theory. It's not hard to imagine many Cerebus *readers—knowing me only from the pages of* Cerebus*—seeing in me Shaw's Unreasonable Man particularly relative to the feminist-homosexualist axis. I don't "buy into" the fashionable and (in my view) wrong-headed theories which currently dominate our society. Particularly the urge to create a perception of reality that is one big gray interchangeable mass: Homos and heteros are the same. Men and women are the same. Dogs and people are the same. Children are the same as adults. I would take issue with the idea that I (in any way) want to adapt that world to myself. No. I'm content to point out the inherent stupidity of the overarching view—what I see as the feminist-homosexualist view—as eloquently as I can and then move onto other areas of greater (and infinitely more sensible) interest.*

*In a nut-shell: far from "homo-*phobia*"...*

(I think it worth noting, parenthetically, that—in its literal sense—homophobia refers to an entrenched fear or dislike of the male sex, or more generally, of human beings. It is just another term—like chauvinism—which has been misappropriated by the feminist-homosexualist axis and—Humpty-Dumpty-like—remade in their collective lunatic image with no regard for its actual meaning)

*...far from "homo-*phobia*" posing any great threat to society...*

(I think the heterosexual community is almost literally "bending over backwards" to accommodate what many—if not all*—of us would regard as really unsavoury and bestial practices)*

*...I think the real danger is posed to society by "homo-*mania*," the feminist-homosexualist axis' inclination to believe that EVERYONE is a homosexual, or that EVERYONE has homosexual traits which they are suppressing, or (at least) that EVERYONE is bisexual: and by the obnoxious feminist view that anyone who doesn't find obnoxious feminists sexually desirable must be gay, that anyone who isn't married to an obnoxious feminist must be gay, that anyone who doesn't* want *to get married to an obnoxious feminist must be gay, that anyone who doesn't have an obnoxious feminist girlfriend must be gay, that anyone who doesn't want to have an obnoxious feminist girlfriend must be gay and—by the homosexualist view (so aptly demonstrated by Dave Brady in* Reading Cerebus*)—that anything which is construed by a homosexualist to be evidence of homosexuality is,* ipso facto, presto-change-o, *irrefutable evidence of homosexuality. The danger, in my view, is that it skews perceptions of society in the peculiar tangential directions of societal minorities: obnoxious feminists and homosexualists, by dominating societal debate out of proportion to the size of those minorities. Let me skew the debate along extreme heterosexualist lines and show you what I mean:*

To me, the current template for an ideal feminist marriage seems far more homosexual in its nature than anything that I see in MY *life. Both husband and wife doing the cooking and doing the vacuuming, both of them doing the shopping and the laundry, both of them minding the children and changing the diapers, both of them engaged in the hard-fought ballsy world of their respective occupations, both tearfully pouring forth their little hearts and souls to one another, both being tough as nails when it comes time to be tough as nails, both (not to put too fine a point on it) wearing the pants in the family...well, it seems to me that all that is missing from such an ideal feminist marriage is a strap-on dildo for the wife, so both of them can—in the confines of the marital bedroom—penetrate and* be *penetrated.*

What could be fairer? What could be more reciprocal, more even-handed? After all, friend husband, in your capacity as an interchangeable member of the interchangeable gender you share with your wife, it's not the actual orgasm or the glorious assertion of your masculinity that you're interested in, is it? Heavens to Betsy, No! That *crass, boorish level of bestial self-centeredness is limited to sexist pigs like Dave Sim. For you—good caring, sharing, nurturing, understanding husband that you are—it's the...closeness, the feeling of...sharing, the feeling of...intimacy. Just think of being penetrated by your wife's strap-on dildo as a way of really...opening up...to your wife in a brand new and exciting way. You might even learn new and valuable lessons about how hard to THRUST! and how hard...not...to thrust when you're inside someone's soft and vulnerable bodily orifice. Just think of the new tenderness and sensitivity you'll bring to* your *love-making knowing that SHE!! GETS!! HER!! TURN!! Just think how it will help...regulate...the number of times you're going to want to have sex when you know that (when the time does come) she gets her turn for ten minutes, you get your turn for ten minutes, she gets her turn for ten minutes...*

Does the idea appeal to ME*?*

Hell, no, but then I'm a self-centred sexist pig who thinks men are made to penetrate and dominate women in bed and women are made to be penetrated and dominated by men. Remember? I'm the self-centred sexist pig who thinks that interchangeability—equality (as you would have it)—is a bad idea. I'm not a sensitive, caring, sharing husband like you—who believes in complete and total equality between the genders. What a golden opportunity for you! Just think what a FOOL you'll be making of me with your wife POUNDING! AWAY! inside your rectum.

UnH! That Dave Sim. UNH! He doesn't UNH! Know what he's UNH! Missing, boy. Real UNH! Closeness. Real UNH! Intimacy.

Think of the solidarity you'll be expressing with your gay brothers and your gay sisters. You can at least suggest *it to your wife, right? I mean, that's what marriage is all about, right? Communication? It might not appeal to* you, *but what if SHE thinks it's a GREAT IDEA? You're not going to...SELFISHLY...not even bring it up with her, now, are you?*

I can understand an obnoxious female feminist's motivation in getting me to cohabit with her and to behave as if—and pay lip service to—her crazy notion that we are both members of some interchangeable gender (by some accident of fate I got the penis—and if we break up she gets half of my stuff and half of my income). I understand that that is the only game we have going these days, but excuse me if a) that just seems really, really gay to me (and I'm not saying that any man doesn't have the perfect right to live with and capitulate to the viewpoints of the obnoxious, interchangeably gendered roommate/significant other of his choosing) and b) not being remotely gay myself I have no interest in living with an obnoxious, interchangeably gendered roommate/significant other who is either penis-equipped or penile-challenged.

Is there any value to my Supplementary Penis Theory of Vertically Integrated Matrimony so as to effect Genuine Sexual Equality? No. Of course not. It's a rhetorical device. That doesn't mean that there doesn't exist a percentage of the population that would be aroused by the suggestion. The exact percentage would be of interest to the feminist-homosexualist axis. Because it is, by its nature, so obsessed with other people's sex lives, discovering exactly how many husbands relish the idea of being ravished by their wives and how many wives relish storming (as it were) their husband's barricades, to the feminist-homosexualist axis such knowledge would lead to a Significant New Understanding of Ourselves as a Civilized People.

It is my conviction that that isn't true. It is my conviction that—however thoroughly swaddled in the trappings of sociology (and virtually all feminist-homosexualist prurient interests are bundled up in voodoo profession facades)—vulgar gossip is vulgar gossip. If feminists and homosexualists didn't dominate society (far out of proportion to their minority status) salacious-gossip-as-front-page-news would be the exception rather than the rule in our society—as it was prior to the onset of the feminist-homosexualist hegemony. O.J. Simpson, at the turn of the previous century, would have come and gone from the back pages of our newspapers—small item about the indictment, small item about the conviction, small item about the sentencing—instead of ruling the front pages of our newspapers and the airwaves of our global village for well over a year. Gary Condit's censure would be a footnote in the Congressional Record. No one would have heard of Monica Lewinsky or Chandra Levy or any other ambitious, self-important tramp.

And, likewise (I believe) salacious gossip masquerading as sociology would simply find no outlet for its poison.

Dave Brady's obsessive interest in my sex life, to me, says far more about Dave Brady, about the feminist-homosexualist axis and about the degraded turn upon which it has led—and is leading *our society—than it does about me. I ask a number of very hard but necessary questions about feminism and await some semblance of a cogent or semi-coherent opposing view—at the very least a considered and exhaustive parsing and refutation of "Tangent's" most basic and easy-to-understand components: the Impossible Things which the feminist-homosexualist axis demands that we all—ALL—must Believe Before Breakfast. I await (six months later) a retrospective defence, an explanation, a rationale, a rationalization, an excuse or even a decent cover story for feminism's usurping of the Civil Rights movement from black men. What do I get?*

Weeeee think YOOOOUUUU'RRRREEE GAaaaAAAAAY!

Vacuous? To be sure. Uni-dimensional? Unquestionably. Tiresome in its Predictability? What else is new? One might more profitably play chess with a hedgehog as attempt to engage feminists and homosexualists in a dialogue about their (let us face facts at this point) entirely non-existent *overarching societal philosophies. If it weren't for the fact that these addle-pated "serpent brains" have been leading our society in circles for thirty years, the only appropriate reaction would be to burst out laughing.*

SIM: King's knight to king's-bishop-three.
HEDGEHOG: (chews on queen's bishop)
SIM: King's knight's pawn to king's-knight-four
HEDGEHOG: (defecates on queen's rook)
SIM: King's knight takes king's pawn.
HEDGEHOG: (flops over on top of queen's rook, queen's knight, queen's bishop and their respective pawns, scattering them across the board)

(the review of Cerebus: Going Homo *concludes next issue, dropping off quite suddenly where I was—mid-paragraph—on 11 September. Although I will continue to criticize the feminist-homosexualist axis in these pages, this review represents my last...futile...attempt at addressing those constituencies directly)*

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